

care or education needs, but don't give people a big tax cut that costs over \$500 billion that will blow a big hole in the deficit, raise interest rates, raise your mortgage rates, your credit card payments, your car payments, and require even worse cuts than the ones we vetoed last year. That's the wrong way. No U-turn. Stay on the right track. Go forward into the future. That's the right way.

I have said a thousand times, but I'll say one more time, I know we still have problems. There are still too many people who want work who don't have it. We've got to give all those people that we're saying—on welfare—there's no more guaranteed check anymore—we've got to make a lot more Marilyn Milnes because they're entitled to work if we're going to cut them off a check for their kids. We've got to give them the jobs. We've got to create the jobs.

I know there are still people who have worked hard and don't have a pay raise. And we've got to give those folks the education they need and challenge their employers to be responsible when they make a profit to share their income with their employees so we can go forward and grow together. I know that. But I will say again, as I have said over and over and over again since 1991, if we want a country where the American dream is alive for everybody who will work for it, if we want a country where people

are coming together, not being divided, if we want a country that is leading the world for peace and freedom and prosperity, we've got to have opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a sense of community.

We are all in this fight for the future together. I don't want to be told, "You're on your own." I don't want to look at people and say, "You're on your own." I believe we're stronger when we join hands and march into that future together on the right track, the right track. Will you help us? Will you stay with us? Will you fight for victory? Will we win? [Applause] I know we will.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. at the old C&O train station, prior to his departure on the 21st Century Express. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; Charlotte Pritt, West Virginia gubernatorial candidate; Marilyn Milne, president, Boomerang Medical Transcription, Inc.; Senator Rockefeller's wife, Sharon; Mayor Jean Dean of Huntington; Chuck Chambers, co-chair, West Virginia State Democratic Party Executive Committee; Hulett C. Smith, former Governor of West Virginia; and Cecil Roberts, president, United Mine Workers of America. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in Ashland, Kentucky

August 25, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you very much. You have made me very happy today. My daughter, Chelsea, and I are delighted to be here. Hillary had to leave us in West Virginia to go on to her hometown of Chicago to make sure everything was all warmed up for us. We're on the right track to Chicago, and we're on the right track to the 21st century.

I thank Governor Patton for being here. I always enjoy seeing the Governor and Mrs. Patton, and I'm glad your mother is here today because I want her to hear the President say

that if every Governor in America had as much energy and drive and determination as Paul Patton we wouldn't have the problems we have today. He has really got it.

I thank Senator Wendell Ford for his words and for being here. I also thank the distinguished Congressman from Louisville, Mike Ward, for being here. We also have—I know Steve Beshear, the United States Senate candidate, and Denny Bowman, a congressional candidate. And I want you to send them up there; we need some help. We need some help.

Wendell Ford was very kind in what he said about me, but let me tell you, if it hadn't been for Wendell Ford, if he had gone the other way, we would not have voted in 1993 to reduce

the deficit, get the interest rates down, and get the economy going again. The deficit is 60 percent lower than it was when I took office; it's gone down 4 years in a row, 4 years in a row, for the first time—listen to this—the deficit has gone down 4 years in a row for the first time since before the Civil War, in the 1840's. A President has done that, thanks to Wendell Ford and thanks to Mike Ward. And we did it while continuing to invest in education, in environmental protection, and protecting Medicare and Medicaid.

And then, when our friends in the opposition won the Congress, and they wanted to remove the guarantee of Medicaid that helps middle class people with families in nursing homes, that helps middle class families with people with disabilities in them, that helps poor children and pregnant women, when they wanted to cut back on education when we should be investing more, when they wanted to cut back drastically on our ability to protect the environment, when they wanted to give corporations permission to take \$15 billion out of their workers' pension funds, when they wanted to raise taxes on millions of the lowest income working people in this country, Wendell Ford and Mike Ward said no and made my veto stand up. We said no, and I thank them for it.

Thank you, Billy Ray Cyrus, for coming. My daughter is glad she made the trip now. [Laughter] And so are all the rest of you. When I heard you cheering for him when he got off the train, I thought I was just sort of the supporting act. I thought I was supposed to go first. [Laughter] Happy 35th birthday. I was 35 once. [Laughter] Enjoy it while it lasts. We congratulate you on your hard-won success, and we're very proud of you. And I know your father, State Senator Ron Cyrus, is here. We know he's proud of you, too. Thank you very much for coming to be with us.

I want to thank two of my former colleagues for being here, your former Governor, Martha Layne Collins; former Governor John Y. Brown. Phyllis George Brown, thank you for being here. I thank the chair of the Kentucky Democratic Party, Bob Babbage, and all the other Democrats who are here. I thank the bands that played, Unlimited Tradition and the Mountain Opry. I wish I had been here. All the band members and the cheerleaders from Boyd, Greenup, and Pike Counties, thank you all for being here. I thank the folks in West Virginia

who came with me and the folks from Ohio, including former Congressman and Congressman-to-be, Ted Strickland. I'm glad he is here today.

Folks, most of all, I want to thank Kevin Gunderson. I want to thank Kevin Gunderson not only for what he said but, most important, for who he is, for not giving up when he was down and out, for refusing to give up on a productive life, for being determined to stick up for what is good and worthy in all people and to make the most of the abilities God has left him, which as you can see here, were many indeed. We thank you, sir, and God bless you.

You know, I was up the road in Huntington, West Virginia, just a minute ago, and I was shaking hands with the crowd. And this little girl came up to me, and she said, "Did you really call Kerri Strug at the Olympics?" I said, "I sure did." She said, "Did she really come to the White House?" I said, "She sure did." I said, "Not only that, she and her family came to New York to my birthday party." She said, "Really?" I said, "You like her, don't you?" And do you know what she said? She said, "I got it on tape." [Laughter] This little girl was about 8 or 9 years old. And I said, "Well, let me tell you something. You save that tape for the rest of your life, and every time something bad happens to you, every time you feel desperate, every time you feel troubled, you put that tape in the television and you watch that little girl with her bad ankle do that vault, and you say, 'I can get up. I can go on. I can do it. I can do it.'"

Why? Why do we all love the Olympics so much? Because it's the way we think life ought to be. Everybody gets to show up. Nobody cares about your race, your religion, where you're from. All you got to do is be willing to play by the rules. You can't get ahead by cheating. Nobody gets anything by breaking their opponent's ankles or legs. Nobody gets anywhere by standing up in front of a microphone and telling you how terrible people their opponents are. You've got to reach down deep inside and do something good, just as good as you can do. And because of that, even the people that don't get medals come out way ahead. That's the way life ought to be. We know that's the way life ought to be.

Folks, 4 years ago I came to Kentucky because I was worried about our country. We had the slowest job growth since the Depression.

We had stagnant wages. We had rising crime. We had neglected challenges. And our country seemed to be drifting and dividing toward the 21st century. And I had a vision that I thought we owed it to our children to pass along, a vision of America in the year 2000 where every child has a chance to live out their dreams as long as they're responsible citizens, a country where we are bound together across the lines that divide us, by our shared values. I don't want us to be divided like these other countries, by race and religion and all these other things. I want us to say, "If you believe in the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and if you show up for work every day, you're our kind of person and we're for you and we're going forward together."

And I wanted our country to be the strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity way into the 21st century. That's what I wanted. And 4 years later, I come back to tell you, we are on the right track to the 21st century.

We are on the right track, because Americans from all walks of life are doing what you are doing here in Ashland. We are going in the right direction because there are people like you everywhere who are working at the grassroots level. You have a long history here of helping people in your community to build a strong future, from the days when the Moonlight School opened the first adult education classes in America to the Boyd County School today where Norma Meek runs the Family Resource Center, set up by the 1990 Education Reform Act to give our at-risk kids not just something to say no to but something to say yes to, positive role models, positive alternatives, positive activities, to give our kids a future. I want to salute another citizen of this area, Dr. Mary Pauline Fox, who has dedicated her entire life to bring health care to the people of rural Pike County. That's what we need.

My strategy for the 21st century is simple: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a stronger American community where we know we have to go forward together and everybody has a role to play. With all respect to my opponent, I think it does take a village to raise a child, strengthen a family, build a community, and build a country.

What are the results? Look at the last week. In just the last week, over strong opposition, we finally got an increase in the minimum wage for 10 million hard-working Americans. And that

bill included tax relief for 90 percent of the small businesses in this country if they invest more in their business. And it made it easier for people in small businesses to take out retirement plans for themselves and their employees. It was a wonderful bill. It gave a \$5,000 tax credit to any American family that will adopt a child. It removed the barriers to cross-racial adoption. That minimum wage bill was pro-work, pro-business, pro-family, pro-America. I'm proud we fought for it, and I'm proud we won it.

We signed the Kennedy-Kassebaum health care reform bill that says, if you lose your job or somebody in your family gets sick, you can't have your health insurance taken away from you anymore. You can't be denied the right to health insurance. Twenty-five million Americans can be helped by that.

We passed a welfare reform plan that says we are going to go from welfare to work and give people the dignity of work so they can raise their children not in dependency but in independence. It was the right thing to do.

But this is the last of the big story. You heard what Senator Ford said. In 1993 every single solitary Republican in the Congress voted against our economic reform plan. They said it would increase the deficit. They said it would cripple the economy. It cut the deficit by 60 percent. It drove interest rates down. We continued to invest in education, the environment, technology, and our future. And guess what? Four years later, 10 million new jobs; 4.4 million new homeowners; 10 million Americans who have refinanced their homes at lower interest rates; 12 million Americans who have taken a little time off from work when a child was born or a parent was sick under the family leave law without losing their jobs; 1.3 million Americans fewer on welfare; a 40 percent increase in child support enforcement collections. We are moving in the right direction, on the right track.

We protected the pensions of 40 million people. And then when they tried to say, "You can raid the pension funds of workers," we said, "No, no, no, we've been down that road before. We just protected them. You can't have that \$15 billion; it belongs to the workers of America and to their retirement." Fifty million Americans are breathing cleaner air. We cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than they did in 12. We are moving in the right direction, on the right track to the 21st century.

And what I want to say to you today is as I make my way to Chicago and I go to the towns just like this one in the heartland of America, I'm doing this for a reason. I want you to know that every day for 4 years I have gone to that Oval Office and thought about you and what would make it easier for you to have strong families, good jobs, safe streets, a clean environment, good schools, and a bright future.

And I want you to fight our fight for the 21st century. Folks, this next several years can be the brightest time in American history. There will be more opportunities for our children to live out their dreams and adults to live out their dreams than ever before. Our kids in this crowd today will be doing jobs within a decade that have not been invented yet, that have not even been imagined yet. But we have to be ready for that future.

We have laid the basis. We have got the unemployment rate down. We've got our economic house in order. We've got the crime rate coming down 4 years in a row. We've got the welfare rolls coming down. We've got a more peaceful world where there are no nuclear missiles pointed at the people of the United States since the dawn of the nuclear age. We are moving in the right direction.

But we have more to do. You know as well as I do, right here in Kentucky there are still people that want to work who don't have jobs. And you know as well as I do we cannot afford to let this welfare reform bill be just a budget cutting measure that leaves poor folks and their kids out on the street. We've got to get them jobs to do. You can't tell people to go to work unless there's work to go to.

And you know as well as I do that there are still people right here in Kentucky that are working harder and harder, and they still haven't gotten a raise. And we know that part of that is a challenge to the business community to share their profits fairly with their employees, but part of it is a challenge to working people to upgrade their education and skills so they can earn more money in this tough global economy.

And I am committed, I am committed to putting education at the top of America's agenda and keeping it there for the next 4 years until everybody can benefit from the global economy.

I want to see every classroom in Kentucky and the United States, every single one, hooked up to the information superhighway so every

kid in the poorest hill and holler of Arkansas or Kentucky can have access to the same information as the children in the wealthiest schools in America. We can do it in 4 years.

I want ours to be the first administration ever to help the public school districts of this country invest in their school facilities to upgrade those facilities to give people good, modern places to go to school with all the latest developments. If the poor districts need help, they ought to get it. If the overcrowded district needs help, they ought to get it. We proposed to increase school construction by 25 percent over the next 4 years, and we can do it under our program.

And most important, more important than anything else, I want to give you a country in which 2 years of education after high school becomes as universal in 4 years as high school is today, by giving every American family that needs it a \$1,500 refundable tax credit for the cost of community college tuition for 2 years and giving those same families up to \$10,000 in tax deduction for the cost of any kind of education after high school and giving unemployed workers a skills grant worth over \$2,000 to take wherever they need to get the training to go back to work at a better wage. This is the America I want to build, and I want you to help me build it.

I want you to support me in helping to create jobs not only for people on welfare but for single men and for others who are unemployed who need the jobs. I want you to support me in building on health care reform and saying, okay, we've now said you can't lose your insurance if you have been sick or you changed jobs. Now we have got to say, if you're unemployed for a long time, you run out of money, we're going to help you. We're going to guarantee people health insurance if they're unemployed for 6 months. We need to help more people keep their health, not lose it and their bankroll as well.

Let me just say one other thing. In honor of this fine, fine man that introduced me, I want you to help me finish our commitment to putting 100,000 police on the street. You know, it wasn't so very long ago when it was rare for me to meet anyone—anyone—who thought we could lower the crime rate. People just took it for granted that the cities were dangerous and the little towns in the country were about to get that way. People just took it for

granted that we were going to have rising crime rates from now on.

We have had 4 years with the crime rate going down. And it's not a mystery: more police in community policing, more police officers in our safe and drug-free schools program in the school, telling these kids that drugs are dangerous; we don't care what you hear, what you see in the movies, what you hear anywhere else, they are dangerous. They're not just illegal; they will kill you.

We have taken those assault weapons off the street, and we've passed the Brady bill. And not a single hunter in Kentucky or Arkansas has missed a deer season or any other kind of season. Not anybody lost a gun. Not anybody. So all that stuff they told you back in '94 when they were winning the Congress, saying we were going to get your rifle and all that, it was a big load of bull then, and it's a big load of bull now. The difference is now you know it because you have had 2 years, and you still got your gun. But I'll tell you who doesn't have a gun: 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers could not buy a handgun because of the Brady bill, and we're safer because of it.

But our friends in the other party, they don't like this 100,000 police program, and they don't like the safe and drug-free schools program. She's talking about one over there—they voted against the safe and drug-free school program; then they tried to get rid of it. They voted against the 100,000 police program, and then they tried to get rid of it. And they're still trying to do away with it. I tell you, this is crazy. If the crime rate's going down, we need to put more police officers on the street, not back up and undo what we've done to get it down. It's not low enough yet. Do you think it's low enough?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Then I say, finish the job and stop those that want to turn it around. Let's go.

And the last thing I want to say is this, folks. We have a lot of other challenges—I'll talk more about them at the convention—challenges at home, challenges abroad. I've got a lot of other ideas about what to do in the next 4 years. But let's look at the big picture. We've got to keep this economy going until everybody has a chance to benefit from it.

Now, we've proved that we can get the deficit down and grow the economy. I told you this

would produce 8 million jobs; it produced 10. I told you we'd cut the deficit in half; we cut it by more than 60 percent. We're doing the right thing.

Now, we ought to give Americans a tax cut who need it, and it ought to be targeted to childrearing and child care and education and to expanded IRA's that you can withdraw from for a first-time homebuying or health insurance policy or to pay for education. I'm for all that. We can afford that kind of tax cut. And it'd be worth a lot to middle class, hard-working families. But we cannot afford to go right back around and take a U-turn and make the same mistake we made before. And that's what the other side is proposing, a tax cut 5 times as big as mine that they don't know how they're going to pay for. And you know what will happen; it will blow a hole in the deficit. That means higher interest rates. That means whatever you get in the tax cut, you'll pay right back in your mortgage payment, your car payment, your credit card payment. It also means even bigger cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment than I vetoed when they shut the Government down. I didn't put up with it before; I won't put up with it again. It is not the right thing for America.

Now, you look at that train there. If you were on that train going to your destination, which is the 21st century, the last thing in the wide world you'd want to do is to make a U-turn just because you heard a pretty song somewhere along the way. [Laughter] That's a pretty song, that big old tax cut. But it's like that contract. Do you remember their contract? They never did say word one about it in San Diego, did they? I didn't watch it, but somebody told me they listened intently for 4 days for their record, and they never talked about their record and their contract. Do you remember, it sounded so pretty in 1994? And then the consequences came in in '95 and '96. And thank goodness for America, Wendell Ford and his friends were there to stand up and say no. But if you give them the White House and the Congress, there won't be anybody to say no. And they'll get to do their U-turn, and it will sound pretty. And then you'll have to deal with the consequences: high interest rates, slow growth, and exploding debt.

Let me just tell you one other thing. The budget of the United States of America would be in surplus today—this day—if it were not

for the interest we're paying on the debt run up in the 12 years before I took office when they quadrupled the debt with all those tax cut promises. You wouldn't yourself, in this beautiful town of Ashland—you wouldn't yourself go down to the local bank and borrow money to give yourself a tax cut, would you? You wouldn't do it. Why would you hire somebody else to do something you wouldn't do for yourself? We cannot blow up the debt. We can give you a tax cut. It will help you raise your kids. It will help you get an education. It will help you with health care and homebuying. And we can afford it and still balance the budget and protect our priorities and build on the future.

And the last thing I want to say is this: All this comes down to whether we're going to meet our challenges and protect our values, whether you believe we can create opportunity and have more responsibility, and whether we can go forward together, or whether you're better off with somebody telling you, "The Government's the

problem. It's not yours. You're on your own. Have a nice life. Here's a little money."

I believe you know from your life in this great, grassroots, God-fearing American community that we are all in this together, we had better lock arms and go forward together, and that when America is together and we're positive and we act like this fine police officer and local government official and we act like that wonderful young girl in her Olympic championship, America always wins. Let's stay on the right track for the 21st century.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:05 p.m. at Riverfront Park. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky, his wife, Judi, and his mother, Irene; musician Billy Ray Cyrus; Ashland City Councilman Kevin Gunderson, a former police officer disabled in the line of duty, who introduced the President; and U.S. Olympic gymnast Kerri Strug.

Interview With Wolf Blitzer, Jill Dougherty, and Claire Shipman of CNN August 25, 1996

Teenage Drug Use

Mr. Blitzer. Mr. President, first of all, thank you so much for spending some time with us.

You've asked the American public to give you credit for your achievements. The budget deficit has gone down, there have been millions of new jobs created, the crime rate has gone down, but are you also willing to accept responsibility for the dramatic increase in drug use among young people since you've taken office?

The President. Well, I'm certainly willing to say that our best efforts have not turned it around, and I'm very concerned about it.

I talked about this in the State of the Union Address. I've been telling the American people for over a year that—myself, before we had a study—I've been making full disclosure here that we had a crime rate going down but a youth crime rate going up; we had a drug use rate going down but a youth drug use going up. Now, finally, the youth crime rate has started to go down. So about the only trend in all of America, whether it's economic or social, that's going in the wrong direction is this youth

drug use. And it began, apparently, with a change in attitudes about 1990. The patterns, interestingly enough, are the same in Canada and in several European countries where both drug and tobacco use are going up among young people who either don't think it's dangerous or think they can take the risks. And I'm very, very concerned about it.

Mr. Blitzer. Well, the accusation that Bob Dole and many other Republicans, of course, make is that someone was asleep on the job during these past 3½, 4 years while there's been this explosion in drug use among young people.

The President. Well, that's not true, because we were not asleep on the job. And that's why I've been talking about it. Like I said, I've been talking about it a lot longer than they have; they waited for a study and an election season. I have been telling the American people in all these community stops I've been making for months and months and months, going back a year, that the one thing that's not going right in this country is that the drug use rate among young people is going up.